

House Resolution 1023 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Holmes of the 61st, Thomas of the 55th, Sinkfield of the 60th, Bruce of the 64th, Beasley-Teague of the 65th, and others

A RESOLUTION

Dedicating certain portions of the state highway system; and for other purposes.

PART I

WHEREAS, at the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the United States Army Air Corps formed the 99th Fighter Squadron at Tuskegee Institute to train black fighter pilots who, until that time, had not been accepted into pilot training programs in the military; and

WHEREAS, after receiving their training, the Tuskegee Airmen were sent to the European Theatre of Operations in 1943 and served in combat in North Africa, Sicily, and Europe; and

WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen became the first squadron to sink a naval destroyer with only machine guns and the first to shoot down a German jet fighter during World War II; and

WHEREAS, by the end of World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen had been credited with 261 enemy aircraft destroyed; 148 enemy aircraft damaged; 940 units of enemy ground transportation destroyed or damaged; 15,553 combat sorties in 1,578 missions over North Africa, Sicily, and Europe; and more than 200 bomber escort missions without losing a bomber to enemy fighters; and

WHEREAS, the unit and its officers and enlisted personnel received three Presidential Unit Citations, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and Legions of Merit, the Red Star of Yugoslavia, nine Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars, and more than 700 Air Medals and clusters; and

WHEREAS, sixty-six of the Tuskegee Airmen were killed in combat, and another 33 were shot down and held as prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, the unqualified success of the Tuskegee Airmen led to the eventual integration of the United States armed forces; and

1 WHEREAS, the superior record of the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II was accomplished
2 by individuals who bravely accepted the challenge and proudly displayed their skill and
3 determination in the face of racism and bigotry at home and who continued to contribute to
4 this country after their military service in World War II; and

5 WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., is an education and community service organization
6 dedicated to maintaining the traditions of the Tuskegee Airmen and preserving the legacy of
7 the first generation of African American military aviators of the Second World War with 42
8 chapters throughout the United States, and it has consistently provided inspiration,
9 motivation, mentoring, and role models for elementary, middle, and high school students in
10 this country; and

11 WHEREAS, it is only fitting and proper that Camp Creek Parkway in Fulton County from
12 its intersection with Fulton Industrial Boulevard to its intersection with Interstate
13 Highway 85 should be dedicated in honor of these brave individuals as the Tuskegee Airmen
14 Parkway.

15 **PART II**

16 WHEREAS, Roderick Steele was a slave boy born about 1847; and

17 WHEREAS, Roderick Steele's owner was James Potter, Trustee for I.A. Potter Estate; and

18 WHEREAS, slaves from the fields were used to help defend the Confederate line at Monteith
19 and obstruct the Augusta Road to Savannah as General Sherman marched from Atlanta to
20 the Sea and this was documented by Major Alfred L. Hartridge in *The Seige of Savannah* in
21 December, 1864; and

22 WHEREAS, according to folklore, Roderick Steele drove the water wagon and provided
23 water to all Confederate and Union soldiers during the battle at Monteith; and

24 WHEREAS, the slaves' assistance helped Confederate soldiers to detour General Sherman's
25 army through Mulberry Grove Plantation; and

26 WHEREAS, the actions of Roderick Steele and other slaves helped save Savannah from
27 destruction by prolonging General Sherman's march to Savannah; and

WHEREAS, he is buried in the historic Richmond Church Cemetery which is located in Port Wentworth, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, it is only fitting that the life of this courageous man be memorialized by dedicating a lasting monument in his honor.

PART III

WHEREAS, impresario, music pioneer, and savvy businessman Phil Walden nurtured and gave voice to hundreds of musicians who contributed to shaping America's music history, from Southern rock to rhythm and blues to alternative rock; and

WHEREAS, born in Greenville, South Carolina, on January 11, 1940, the second of three sons to Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Walden, Phil Walden came to Macon, Georgia, at the age of three, planting his roots deep in this state's red clay; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, he opened the Phil Walden Artists and Promotions agency on Mulberry Street in Macon, signing on a young Georgia artist named Otis Redding, who later had one of the defining songs of the era, "(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay"; and

WHEREAS, over more than four decades, Phil Walden, through his Georgia based recording companies Capricorn Records and Velocette Records, represented and produced some of the hottest musical talent of the times, including renowned hit-makers Sam and Dave, Percy Sledge, the Allman Brothers Band, the Marshall Tucker Band, the Dixie Dregs, Elvin Bishop, Wet Willie, Widespread Panic, Cake, and 311, establishing Georgia as a haven for Southern music that draws both musicians and music fans from around the world to Macon and Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, through his friendships with and promotion of artists of diverse races, Phil Walden broke down racial barriers during a time of segregation, allowing music to become a common ground for understanding and relationship building that has spanned generations of music fans, for which he was recognized with the 1977 Martin Luther King, Jr., Humanitarian Award and the 1978 American Jewish Committee Human Relations Award; and

WHEREAS, with his lifelong passion for music, his uncanny ability to recognize talent, and his gift for promotion, Phil Walden made an indelible mark on music history and was a true son of the South in preserving the notes and voices of some of Georgia's best artists, which

led to him being inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1986 and to being named one of the "100 Georgians to Shape the 20th Century" by *Georgia Trend* magazine in 2000.

PART IV

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that Camp Creek Parkway in Fulton County from its intersection with Fulton Industrial Boulevard to its intersection with Interstate Highway 85 is dedicated as the Tuskegee Airmen Parkway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the interchange at I 16 and Business Route 41 at the Otis Redding Bridge be dedicated as the Phil Walden Memorial Interchange.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the viaduct from Monteith to Meinhart over I-95 in Port Wentworth, Georgia, is dedicated as the Roderick Steele Viaduct.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation is authorized and directed to erect and maintain appropriate signs dedicating the road facilities named in this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Department of Transportation, to the Atlanta Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., to the North Port Wentworth Citizens Council, and to the family of Phil Walden.